

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1656
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
LUSAKA 4345
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3829

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: VOTER REGISTRATION MOVES AHEAD

1. ACCORDING TO BOTH GOVERNMENT AND INDEPENDENT SOURCES IN NAMIBIA, THE VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN HAS GOTTEN OFF TO A GOOD START IN ITS FIRST WEEK. A LOCAL JOURNALIST TOLD US THAT IN THE INITIAL WEEK, 13 PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS HAD REGISTERED, FAR MORE THAN HAD BEEN HOPED FOR. JOHN VIALI IN THE AG'S OFFICE SAID THAT 35,000 HAD BEEN REGISTERED IN OVAMBO. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER SOURCE, THIS REPRESENTED TEN PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN OVAMBO. WHILE REGISTRATION IN OVAMBO IS RUNNING BEHIND THE AVERAGE, THE TURNOUT IS REPORTEDLY HIGH IN AREAS SUCH AS HERREROLAND, DAMARALAND AND KAVANGO. REGISTRATION HAS REPORTEDLY NOT BEGUN IN CAPRIVI
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AS THE EASTERN AREA OF THE REGION REMAINS HEAVILY FLOODED.

2. SOURCES AGREE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SLOW TURNOUT OF WHITES. THIS IS EXPLAINED BY AKTUR'S OPPOSITION TO THE REGISTRATION BECAUSE OF THE FOUR-YEAR RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AND BY THE LACK OF ANY URGENCY IN SIGNING UP.

3. THE REGISTRAR'S OFFICE IN WINDHOEK INFORMED A SOURCE THAT NO REGISTRATION POINTS HAVE BEEN SET UP IN WALVIS BAY. RESIDENTS IN WALVIS BAY, HOWEVER, WHO QUALIFY BY VIRTUE OF HAVING BEEN BORN IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA MAY REGISTER IN SWAKOPMUND. LONG-TERM RESIDENCE IN WALVIS BAY, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT MEET THE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT. VIAL SAID THAT THE AG'S OFFICE HAS HAD MANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM RESIDENTS OF WALVIS BAY INCLUDING COLOREDS, WHITES, AND BLACKS WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES SOUTHWESTERS AND WHO ARE CONCERNED THAT THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO REGISTER.

4. COMMENT: EFFORTS BY THE DTA PARTIES TO TURN OUT THEIR NEMXERS VERY LIKELY ACCOUNTS FOR THE EARLY RUSH OF REGISTRATION IN THE BLACK COMMUNITIES. THE NUMBER OF THISE REGISTERING WILL PROBABLY DROP OFF SHARPLY IN THE COMING WEEKS.
EDMONDSON

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